NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE
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MEDLARS II Project Report

MEDLARS II has been under development at NLM since the contract was awarded to Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) on June 11, 1968. (*News*, January 1968, June 1968, October 1968).

Much of the contractor's early effort was directed toward the development of the specialized software elements of the Computer System for Medical Information Services (COSMIS). CSC also performed an analysis of programming languages and the necessary examination of functional requirements pursuant to the realization of the overall systems design.

There are two advisory bodies for the project, the User Review Group, composed of NLM staff members, and the Research and Development Subcommittee of the NLM Board of Regents. The former is concerned primarily with the adequacy of the system to meet the functional requirements and the latter provides policy guidance and advice to the Director as requested.

A thorough assessment and review of the project in April 1969 resulted in a major revision of the contract, including a detailed schedule of events leading to the

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Deputy Director Detailed to NAS

Mr. Scott Adams, NLM Deputy Director since 1960, will be detailed on September 1 to the Office of the Foreign Secretary, National Academy of Sciences (Dr. Harrison Brown), as a special assistant to work on UNISIST, a combined project of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU).

This joint project involves a study of the feasibility of a world science information system, and is concerned with exploring the interconnectibility of both existing and developing science information systems in the various scientific fields. Both ICSU and UNESCO are interested in the possibility of benefits from such systems to developing countries.

Mr. Adams was named to the UNESCO International Advisory Committee on Libraries, Documentation and Archives in 1967. The following year he became a member of the Advisory Group to the Central Committee, ICSU/UNESCO Study of the Feasibility of a World Science Information System.

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implementation of MEDLARS II. CSC is currently working on the development of the system under this revised contract, negotiated and signed on June 20, 1969. Adjustment of the NLM management for MEDLARS II has also been effected, primarily to encourage increased concentration of resources on the project. Ralph Simmons was assigned as Project Manager, reporting directly to the Director, NLM. A small staff, assigned to Mr. Simmons exclusively for the project, has the full responsibility for the development and implementation of MEDLARS II.

MEDLARS II is being developed in two phases, INITIAL and EXTENDED. INITIAL processing is characterized by "batch" computer operation encompassing the same capabilities as MEDLARS I, with the addition of an augmented MeSH vocabulary, new equipment, and additional selected supporting products. EXTENDED processing provides for major functional activities to be conducted through the use of remote terminal devices linked to the computer files and permitting on-line interaction by the user. This will not only include the on-line capabilities for the functions now supported by MEDLARS I, but will also be extended to include acquisition and ordering, cataloging, interlibrary loan activities and physical location data, vocabulary browsing, search output, total bibliographic control, and the provision of extended capabilities for management information. The INITIAL system is scheduled to be operational by May 31, 1970, and the EXTENDED system by June 30, 1971.

Director Visits Alaska

NLM Director Martin M. Cummings, M.D., journeyed to the nation's newest state July 27-29, to learn how the Library may assist physicians in remote areas requiring improved medical library services. Dr. Cummings remained in Anchorage during his visit, meeting with community medical leaders and with Mrs. Ursula P. Strash, librarian of the Alaska Health Sciences Library, located at the Alaska Native Medical Center. The Library, established under a grant from the Washington/Alaska Regional Medical Program, receives backup service from the Pacific Northwest Regional Medical Library at the University of Washington in Seattle. Not only is it the community medical library for the entire Anchorage area; it also provides library services to physicians, dentists, and other health personnel throughout Alaska.

1,000,000 Citations A Landmark

The first week of August 1969 became another historic milestone for NLM and its computer operation as the number of citations entered in the computer passed the 1,000,000 mark. It took 68 months of operation, from January 1964, to get the first 1,000,000 citations into the NLM computer. Citations were first input at the rate of 11,000 per month in 1964; they now average 20,000 per month in mid-1969, and further growth is anticipated. The second million citations may be expected within 50 months or the latter part of 1973.

Four NLM Associates display the certificates presented to them upon completion of their one-year training on July 30: (from left) Mahesh K. Bhatt, Dr. Joseph Leiter, Associate Director for Library Operations, who made the presentations, Miss Kay Mayfield, Miss Carol Long, NLM *Employee Development Specialist, Sheldon Kotzin, and Mrs. Howertine L. Duncan. Three of the four Associates have accepted positions at the Library -- Miss Mayfield in the History of Medicine Division, Mrs. Duncan in the Reference Services Division, and Mr. Kotzin in the Technical Services Division. Mr. Bhatt will return to the National Medical Library, New Delhi, India, as librarian in charge of government documents.*

Bulletin Article Features NLM

The July 1969 issue of the *Bulletin of the American College of Physicians* carries an article by Dr. Martin M. Cummings, Director of NLM, entitled, "Processing of Information in the National Library of Medicine." The back cover of the magazine features a photograph of the Library.

In the article Dr. Cummings states, "The explosive growth of the world's medical literature makes it virtually impossible for physicians and scientists to satisfy their information needs without efficient indexing and abstracting services which lead them to relevant portions of the literature.

"American medicine has been favored by the availability of a specialized library (NLM) which has for more than a century concerned itself with the informational needs of the community related to health." The article then gives a detailed description of all NLM activities.

International Index of Medical Film Data Computerized

Newly stored on the magnetic tape files of a computer in Atlanta, Georgia, is the largest International Index of Medical Film Data in the world. Compiled and organized by the National Library of Medicine's National Medical Audiovisual Center, (NMAC), through its Acquisition, Distribution, and Reference Branch, the Index contains detailed descriptive and source information on 25,000 medical/health-related audiovisuals. About 225 additional titles are fed into the collection each month.

Information from the Index is available to researchers, teachers, clinical practitioners, and students in a number of formats---catalogs, special film listings, and special subject searches made on request to NMAC's Reference Section. Requests for searches from the International Index should be addressed to the NLM, National Medical Audiovisual Center (Annex), 2111 Plaster Bridge Road, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30324.

Drug Literature Bibliography To Be Developed

Physicians and research scientists will benefit from the results of a contract recently initiated by the National Library of Medicine with Paul de Haen, Inc., of New York City.

Principal purpose of the contract is to develop a much-needed comprehensive *Retrospective Drug Interactions Bibliography*, as well as producing computer print-outs and product files of information on drug interactions.

Dr. Arthur A. Wykes, Senior Drug Literature Specialist in the Drug Literature Program of Specialized Information Services, NLM, said that the study will also develop an exhaustive master bibliographic file of literature references derived from pertinent drug interaction papers, reports, reviews, editorials, and private files produced between January 1, 1938 and December 31, 1968.

The study is being undertaken because drug interactions may have a profound influence on the safety and effectiveness of drugs. Although the literature on drug interactions is substantial and several important reviews have been published, we lack a systematic search of all source material and an organized analysis of the original data and tabulation by computer methods.

Such information is needed by the laboratory scientist as a guide for future drug research and by the practicing physician in the prescribing of drugs, as well as by the manufacturer who wishes to combine several effective drugs into one product.

Personnel

John A. Timour, the Library's MEDLARS Liaison Training Officer, has resigned to accept a position as library services director for the Connecticut Regional Medical Program, effective July 26, 1969. Mr. Timour, who came to the Library in August 1966, recently completed his MLS degree program at the University of Maryland. In his new position he will work with Connecticut community hospital libraries, the Yale and University of Connecticut Medical School libraries, and their New England Regional Medical Library at Countway to facilitate the flow of biomedical information to health practitioners in the State. He will have a staff appointment with both the Yale and University of Connecticut medical libraries to reflect their involvement in his activities.

Publications

The National Library of Medicine has published the *International Bibliography of Medicolegal Serials, 1736-1967*, compiled by Dr. Jaroslav Nemec, Reference Services Division. The book is arranged in five parts: I. Definitions; II. Origins of Medicolegal Literature and the Development of Medicolegal Serials; III. Current Trends in Medicolegal Publications; IV. International Bibliography of Medicolegal Serials; and V. Indexes (Title, Editors, Publishers and Sponsors, Subject, Geographic, and Chronological). The 110-page *Bibliography* is sold by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402, for $1.25.

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A bimonthly listing of citations to journal articles on hypertension is being published by the American Heart Association. Titled *Recurring Bibliography of Hypertension*, this brings to 16 the number of specialized bibliographies which are periodically produced from copy provided through NLM's MEDLARS. To place a subscription to the hypertension bibliography ($8.00, U.S. and Canada; $9.00 foreign), or to obtain further information, write: The American Heart Association, Inc., 44 East 23rd Street, New York, New York 10010.